

**UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS LOWELL
CENTER FOR LOWELL HISTORY
ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION**

**SHIFTING GEARS PROJECT
NORTH ADAMS**

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INTERVIEWER: HAROLD JORDAN

DATE:

H = HAROLD

E = EMILY

SG-NA-T042

H: Where were your parents born and raised?

E: Um, my mother was born in Worcester and my father was born in Adams. And my father lived his whole life in Adams, as did my mother in Worcester.

H: Your mother lived in Worcester? [E: Yeah] Okay. Where do they now work and what do they do?

E: Um, they're both in the um, work in the school system. My father works as a principal in North Adams. My mother teaches first grade in Adams.

H: Do they plan to live here for the rest of their lives do you think?

E: Um, in North Adams? I really doubt it actually, because they're looking at land in Stanford. And I think that they plan not to move drastically, but I can picture them moving more southern, because it's cold and my father doesn't really like it.

H: Um, how far southern is that? Southern Berkshire County, or Southern Florida?

E: Uh, no. He likes South Carolina for some reason, because it's hilly and it's like the Berkshires. I think that they like the idea of having seasons, but I don't think that so much snow, and that, that the weather, I think that they think that the weather is a little bit extreme for their tastes. But I don't know. Maybe that's just talk. They might not want to move.

H: Okay. Where were your grandparents born, and where were they brought up?

E: I think that they were both born in Adams. My grandfather might have been born in Italy.

And I have no clue why they moved when they emigrated, or why their parents moved to Adams. I always wondered that, because it's kind of a strange place to move when you're Italian, because everyone who lives in Adams is Polish. But they both lived all their lives, my grandmother lived in North Adams, my grandfather lived in Adams in [Zelnite?], which is an Italian neighborhood. And he, my grandfather worked in Pfeiser and my grandmother worked in Sprague. They were both not very well educated. They went till about the eighth grade, each of them. And my grandmother you know, worked for really small wages. Although she did work the whole time that my father was young, which was strange. She worked nights. And so they had a two parent working family, which wasn't really normal for that time.

H: Okay. So you were partly from Italy. Where else did you come from?

E: My mother I think is, she's partially english, but she's mostly Irish I believe. But I don't really know anything about her family, because her parents both died when they were young.

H: Okay. So are your other grandparents still alive?

E: My father's parents are both living. My mother's parents both died when she was quite young. Her father out(--) Not her father, but her mother died when she was thirteen.

H: Okay, where do they live today, you father's parents?

E: They live in Adams and Florida. They live in Florida for um, six and a half months, and then they live here. They have two houses.

H: Are they retired? [E: Yes] Where did they work when they were employed?

E: My grandmother worked in Sprague's for her whole life, since she was sixteen until she was sixty-five, at various jobs. And my grandfather worked at Pfeiser Alarm Company in Adams.

H: What do you remember, or what have you learned about your great grandparents?

E: Um, well I knew my grandmother's father, and he was, he didn't really, he sort of spoke english, and he was really strange. He grew all these vegetable in his yard. And I don't really remember that much about him. You know, he used to give me money when I was there. And he was um, just a very different sort of person. I know he was married about three or four times, but his wives kept dying. And my grandmother was put in nun school. [Laughs] My grandmother was put in um, she taken care of by nuns for a time, and she, you know, her childhood, I guess her father wasn't really that attentive to her needs. I mean they were sort of you know, but I guess that was the time also. I have absolutely no clue about my mother's um, grandparents. I know that her father had a very large family. They had like twelve kids. And her father's youngest brother was my Uncle Walter, and I knew him real well. He was the only person on my mother's side of the family that I really new. The rest of them, they're, some of them are a little bit, like we know of them, but we don't really like associate with them very much.

H: Okay. Do you have uh, many other aunts, uncles, or other relatives that live in this area?

E: Uh, I don't, I have none except my father's brother who lives in Adams. My father's sister lives in Buffalo. My mother's whole family lives, two, two brothers and sister, a brother and a sis, two sisters live in Worcester and Boston, and her brother lives in New Hampshire, but they never lived here to begin with ever. But my aunt did move away from the area.

H: Would it be fair to say then that you're, you would not consider your family centered in the Northern Berkshire area?

E: Um, I always did, because my grandparents were here. And they, and when it was a, or Christmas, or anything, we used to all go there. And it was a very um, you know, tradition, all the traditions were like around here. But now that they've moved to Florida it's really dispersed. We don't spend Christmas with the family really. We more, or we do Christmas with the people in Worcester instead. So, or else we spend it with friends instead of having a big family [unclear] in the Berkshire County area.

H: Okay. Then on a personal level were you born in North Adams?

E: Um, yes. In 1970.

H: Okay. Have you attended the North Adams public schools?

E: Yes. Well I, I attended school in Adams until I was, from kindergarten until second grade. And then I moved here. Because I lived in Adams when I was born.

H: Um, okay. What work experience have you had while you were in this area?

E: Well. My first job was at North Adams State College in the dish room. And it was just lovely. It was one of those nice summer deals. And I got to take the dirty dishes and scrape off all the food and put them in the dish washer. And it was really awful and I hated it. So that was, I quit that after a little while. And then, I always babysat for awhile. And then I worked at Friendly's, which was also pretty awful. And it was, you know, your basic mindless job, but it was hard and it was in the summer. And I really didn't like that. But now I work at LaVeranda and I really, and I waitress, and I actually sort of like it a little bit better than most jobs. I make a lot of money, so it's good. And I don't have to work very many hours, and the people are really um, they're hard to work for because they're picky, but they're nice people. So I like it. And the other thing that's interesting about it is they have a lot of different type people that go there. There's a lot of people from Williams College that eat there. And also a lot of people from Williamstown in the Theater, and people from North Adams too. But some of them are really interesting to talk too. Like Robert [Plane] goes there, and Rob Lowe. Of course I haven't seen Rob Lowe yet, but I um, but I have a good time and I hope that I'll see you this summer. And um, that's what I plan on doing this summer. I also plan on getting another small job, because, a morning job, because I have to earn money for school.

H: Okay. You mentioned meeting a lot of people at your job. Has your working here affected your perception of the people who live in the area?

E: Um, most of the people that I meet at work, especially I guess more in the summer, I haven't worked there in the summer yet, but they are not from the area. And a lot of them are from New York, and they're kind of obnoxious. But some are just really interesting, because you know, they're theater people and they just have a different perspective on a lot of things. And they're more exposed to other things than North Adams, which probably isn't difficult, because a lot of the people that I know from North Adams are very, like narrow, not narrow minded, but they're very centered here, and they don't really branch out that much into other communities, or other countries. I meet people that you know, just got back from Europe [rest of comment unclear].

H: So you find people more interesting that are not from North Adams?

E: Well um, I think I'm just really bored with North Adams at this point in my life. But I don't think that's uncommon for someone who's going away to school.

H: Okay. Well we'll get into that a little later. How do you think the job opportunities for teenagers in North Adams today, compare to those opportunities in other cities and states?

E: I think that they're okay. I mean I don't have a problem getting a job, because I knew people. But I think that if you're just your basic average person, and I think sometimes it's hard to get a job that you really like, not that everyone likes their summer job by any means, but I, you know I have friends who go down the Cape who get wonderful high paying jobs just because it's a very touristy summer place. But um, you know, North Adams isn't really bad. It's not like you can't find a job. I might be in Burger King, which you might not really enjoy doing, and it might not be intellectually stimulating, or anything, but you can find jobs I suppose. I think that there's a little bit of discrimination against kids on a lot of levels in North Adams, but I don't really think that it prevents you from getting a job.

H: Okay. Um regarding your personal philosophy. What one thing about living in North Adams would you say has benefited you the most?

E: Benefited?

H: The most rewarding for you?

E: I think that North Adams is in an extremely beautiful area, especially in the Fall. I think that the town's a little bit depressed, but it is a very interesting experience. And people who I've met haven't had the experience of living in the Berkshires and being around such historical things. They um, haven't, you know, they don't really understand. And you know, places where there's no mountains and things, they can't comprehend that you know, that it's really this pretty here. And the other thing is that North Adams is a city that has a lot of different history. And I think it's really neat. I think that they've done kind of a good job with that, with the um, Heritage Park. And you know, it's kind of neat to see pictures of old downtown North Adams. I mean the town needs a lot of work, but it's, it's sort of got something that has potential.

H: Um, on the other side of the coin then, what would you say has been the least rewarding

experience you've had um, living in North Adams.

E: Um, I think that a lot of the people that live in North Adams are fairly undesirable. Um, not, not um, I'm not saying from in the leaders stand point. I just think that there's a lot of unemployment. There's a lot of poverty. There's a lot of people who abuse their children. We have very high teenage pregnancy rates. Incest rates. Just everything about the area. And people who live here, there are people who live right down the street from me, you know, and I mean they live in [unclear] and it's really, it's sad. And I think a lot of that you know, really gives people a negative impression in the town. I mean I think that there's also really huge divisions between classes at school. You know, people who have money, or people who have brains, and then there's the other people. And I think that that is kind of sad too. I take care of a little boy who's mother is on welfare. Sometimes I take him from her because you know, she has to do things. And um, you know, it's really sad that they have to live like that, but I think that they're trapped in that role, because they can't really get jobs, or get their act together, or anything. And I also think that some of the people who live here are pretty narrow minded, or um, you know, you see a lot of people who are racist, and people who are just not really that bright, or just plain ignorant. And that's kind of disserving too.

H: Okay. You mentioned the high teen pregnancy rate and poor, or poor, or lower income families. What do you think is the cause of this type of thing in North Adams? Is it a question of moral values, or economic security?

E: I think that for some reason people who have been poor are drawn here, and I can't quite figure out why. I mean property, housing is very cheap. But I can't quite understand it. And I think that it's not morals, I think that it's just ignorance. I think that people really don't that they have another alternative. I think that girls get married, or get pregnant when they're really young for the wrong reasons. And I think that there's no supervision about anything. This school doesn't do a good job doing sex education, nor have they ever when I've been there. Supposedly they have a new program now. And you know, girls are made to feel like that's what they're going to do. They're going to get married, or not, and have a lot of kids. And they see no future. A lot of these people who are really poor see that they can't go on to college, or do anything that they really want. So why even bother. Let's just save up for a car and buy that instead of college tuition. People work too much. Kids have really incredible jobs. That people work forty hours a week and still go to school. And school is like last of the list of important things that people have to do. So that's another problem.

H: How do you think we could improve the situation? Well being the crusating liberal that I am, um, I think that we don't really need more programs. What I think is that we need a better system to distribute the programs. I think that the people who are able to work, I think that every effort should be made to get jobs for them. And I think that they should work. I see no reason why anyone should stay home and collect welfare when they are a perfectly able body. I can see welfare for mothers who are home with their children. And I can see um, it in certain cases, but I can't really approve of you know, men who just drink or fix their cars, or whatever it is that they do all day. And I think that this system is widely abused. I think that the housing situation is just disgusting. We need definitely, we definitely need some new low-income housing, and we need better maintenance of it. We can't have it be as slum-like as it is now.

H: Okay. You mentioned several um, social service issues. How do you think living in North Adams has affected your attitude towards programs like welfare, housing, food stamps, and social services.

E: I think that initially it gave me a very negative impression. You know you'd see kids with tokens, and people would say, oh, you're on welfare to kids in school. And that's really a sad thing, but on the other hand I see, and it used to really bother me, and I used to really be turned off by that. On the other hand I can see how beneficial the programs are. For example, I know this woman who moved from Germany about seven years ago, and left her husband. She has a small child, and he goes to school in North Adams. And she's on welfare, but attends school at State. And she's a very bright woman. She does a lot. She reads constantly. And she really makes a good life for her son. Now I think that's the best possible thing for her right now. I think that some people, you know, definitely abuse it. But I think that without social programs things would be worse than they already are. So we definitely need them.

H: Um, has living in North Adams affected your view on issues like abortion, or euthanasia, capital punishment, this type of (--)

E: Um, no. Well since North Adams has the highest teenage pregnancy rate you don't really hear much about abortion. I think that the town is very slanted and biased in its view about abortion. I have my lovely neighbor up the street who comes and gives me pro-life information constantly. And I really would like to throw it in her face, because I think that she has no view that is worth listening to. But I think that a lot of the people around here are pretty moral and pretty religious, and they're really you know, into telling someone that they should have a baby that they don't want, because God wants them to. And I think that that's totally wrong, but it hasn't really stopped (--) All this religious stuff, and all of this uprising about it, this pro-life stuff, really hasn't changed my view. So I don't really think that it really had this great effect. Although my family is quite liberal, which could also be a factor in that. But I don't think I've been changed by the people. A lot of my friends have used, like a lot of my friends are quite racist, or quite, or they feel because they're women that they can't achieve the same thing that men can. And I think that's completely a product of living in this town, because I think that the men in our school are dominant, and I think that women accept it, accept submissive roles, and I think that it's just really strange and I can't quite figure it out. I mean I just, I realize that Drury is not normal, and I don't know why, but people who I meet from other schools don't act like this. They don't you know, act as dominant and jockish as many of the guys that in our school do. So I think that that shapes it to some degree. You know, I mean your values are [unclear] when you think that sports are everything in your life, and that you know, the best thing to do is worry about what party's on the weekend, which is about the moral issues that are on the minds of people. Another thing that I know, is that no one knows anything about any moral issues, like you could say [apartheid?] and people, if you asked twenty-five people at Drury what it was, I mean probably one would know if you had a good day. And people are so unconcerned with anything. People are so socially unaware of anything that's going on. They're illiterate you know, culturally. And you know, I can't really discuss anything intelligent with any of my good friends, which probably isn't too flattering a thing to say, but I don't know.

Um, the war on drugs thing is um, it's just kind of funny, because so many people do drugs. I

mean I don't, I don't really have a problem with drugs. I mean obviously, but I really don't. I mean I think that people do drugs and it's their own choice. And you know, it's definitely illegal, but it's really too big of a problem to try and completely cut-off. I mean I think people that smoke marijuana are stupid, but you're not really hurting anyone, just themselves.

H: Do you think then that the so called war on drugs is useless?

E: I think that the war on drugs is Republican propaganda basically, but I mean I think it's like, oh we're going to fight a war and we're going to clean up the country's youth so that we can all be good little soldiers, and we can also be part of the thousand points of light and help the country. I really think that that's bull. But you know, I mean if that's what people want to spend their money on, and if that makes people feel better to talk about that, than that's fine. And it's probably a good cause, because you know, innocent people do get killed in drug wars. And drugs you know, do you know, create a lot of illegal activity and organized crime and stuff. And I mean I'm not for them or anything, but I don't really get too excited about it either.

H: You mentioned organized crime. Would you be interested in legalizing drugs if that meant possibly taxing their sale and eliminate crime?

E: So we can bring money for the defense budget. Um, actually I, I sort of do favor legalizing drugs to some extent, because I feel that it would accomplish many things. First of all, it would definitely cut down on crime. I mean if drugs were legal, then we wouldn't have to deal with all of this stuff. I mean people who I know who want cocaine, or who want marijuana can get it easily, but not as easily as if it were legal. So we could just omit steps and we would save a lot of money, the government would in drug surveillance, and things like that. I mean obviously you'd have to draw the line. I mean legalizing heroin seem a bit stupid, but than again, people who are going to use drugs are going to use them anyways, whether it's illegal or not. And I realize that legalizing them makes it a bit easier, but not that much easier. Of course then we'd have the same problem as we do with alcohol. That they'd be an age, and you know, they'd be wide spread abusive people under the age of whatever, twenty-one, or whatever it would be. But I mean there are benefits to it. It kind of surprises me that I'm for it more than not. And we could channel a lot more money in that case into treatment, or um, and use the taxes for treatment, which is kind of dumb to really let people abuse themselves and then treat them. But what we've doing now is dumb too, so.

H: Okay. So let's say we've legalized all sorts of drugs, and it seems uh, many law enforcement agents believe that a lot of crime, stealing, robbing houses, muggings, is to raise money, or to steal money to buy drugs. How do you plan on stopping this sort of difficulty.?

E: You've saying legalized drugs?

H: Drugs, assuming they are legalized.

E: Well see if drugs were legal [H: there will still be crime] then it would be much cheaper, first of all. I mean if you want to buy any type of drug it's a ridiculous amount of money. I mean personally that's probably why I don't, I mean it doesn't even appeal to me, because I just think

it's so costly. But I mean it would be cheaper too. But I mean I think if people get addictive that become dangerous, but I mean we have all kinds of drugs in little federal storehouses. Why don't we just shelve there. I mean I don't really, I don't really see why we can't provide the drugs to the consumers at a nice low cost if we were going to do so. I mean there's no reason in making the prices extremely high.

H: Okay. You just mentioned one of the things that is turning you away from drugs was the high cost. So, but if we were to lower the cost, then do you think you would be interested in using drugs, or people like you might?

E: Oh, of course not. Well see, I'm just selfish and I'm kind of, I like shopping. And you know, I think that it's so stupid that people waste their money on drugs. Personally I think that it's kind of a disgusting habit. And I also, you know, I have real close friends who are very much into drugs, but you know, I think that it's self abuse and I tell them that. And you know, they say hey, do what you want and I'll do what I want. I don't feel pressured to do it at all. If I wanted to do it I would, because I'm very, you know, I basically do whatever I want, you know. And my parents probably wouldn't really approve, but you know, I don't think that that's the thing that's solely stopping me. I think that my good sense is stopping me among other things.

H: Okay. Earlier on you mentioned um, that girls, or young ladies, and women were too submissive. [E: Women] Especially in the high schools.

E: Well obviously.

H: Do you think that's to their blame, or to over dominant males blame? Or whose fault is it?

E: I think that everyone is at fault. I think that it's more prevalent in North Adams than other places. I think that the men in this town, or some of them, are quite ignorant. I think that boys parents are quite ignorant. And more is expected you know, the boy is suppose to go out and work, and get a job, and take care of his woman. You know, I think it's really twisted and sick. I really don't know where people get these ideas, but you know, I mean it doesn't surprise me to any great extent. I think that the girls are dumb too. They're like, oh, who am I going to marry? And I need to find a husband. And I need you know, this and this. And I'm going to go to college, but I'm real interested in getting married anyways right after I go. I mean that really makes me sick. And you know, I have this good friend who is fairly intelligent. And she just doesn't really have any goals for herself, because her father is totally dominant. I mean her mother has a nice hot meal waiting for him on the table every night. Does all the laundry and the housework. Stays home. And you know, it's kind of like "Leave It To Beaver" family. And she thinks that that's what she's going to do. And I mean I think that since it's not really a professional community, there's a lot more of that than there would be in other places. But.

H: Um, would you disagree with someone who honestly believed that was their goal in life? Do you think they're wasting their time being a [E: housewife?] "Leave It To Beaver" wife?

E: No, not at all. My mother raised me until I was seven, and she didn't work, because that's when my brother turned five and went to school. And I think that it was a noble goal. I think

that we've turned out decently. But I think that the problem is, I think that my mother knew that after that, or before that, or whenever she wanted, she could have any career that she so choosed, chose, chosed, because she's a very bright woman. She was educated and you know, had the potentials to you know, go to law school, or get her masters, or do whatever she wanted. I think people have the believe, it might be self-conscious that they just really can't do anything. And I think that's the part that's really harmful. I think that if you have all the options that are available to you, like I can envision myself staying home with my children for a time, but I don't, I wouldn't like to feel like that was the only think that I could do. It's an option, but it's not the only thing that there is. And it's a very noble profession, and you know, I think that women who do that are wonderful, but I think that they should also have other parts of their lives if they want.

H: Okay, we have to be moving on now. Um, how would you describe the sense of pride you have, or possibly do not have in your community?

E: Um, I really don't have any pride in the community. I think that it's very, a very bad place to live. And I, I don't really find anything too enjoyable in North Adams. Like you can't even find a good restaurant in the town, which is such a, it's so awful. But I mean I don't think that it really has much to offer people. I think that it's just so boring and narrow, and you know what I mean? I know people who live here who are really wonderful friends, and people who I probably will know all my life, but you know, I'm definitely going to be moving on soon. So I'm not developing any large sense of pride. In fact when I went place to visit colleges and they asked where I was from, I sort of mumbled North Adams. And then they'd say, "oh, isn't that the one that was in time magazine for the highest teen pregnancy rate?" And I was like, "yeah, that's the one." And you know, you don't really want to just publicize it too much. Although it is sort of a cute place. I mean I think it's kind of cool. My parents lived here and they like it.

H: Okay. Uh, this may be difficult for you, but if you had to pick one thing within, what would you say that you're most proud of in the city?

E: Um, I think that there's not anything that I'm really very proud of. Um, it has good points and I enjoyed my life here with my family and other people, but I wouldn't say that the community gives me an overwhelming sense of pride, or respect.

H: Okay. What, this may also be difficult. What one thing would you pick out as the um, least [E: pride worthy?] pride worthy. That's a good word.

E: Well you know the list is long. Um, I think that it's, the economic depression doesn't bother me, it's the people that really bother me more, because they're just so limited. The town itself is limiting. It's like your sole fulfilling prophecy that you really, you know, I think even at school I have this theory that you know, people think that because they went to Drury they can't really do a lot. And I think that the town just doesn't give anyone very many opportunities to do anything and grow, or learn, or anything. I think that it's sort of lacking in that area. I don't know what area it's good in. I can't really think of any off hand, but you know, it's just so depressed.

H: Very well. Do you think that North Adams' citizens in general have more or less pride in the community than you do?

E: Well I would say I hope that they have more of they would be moved. But I don't, I don't see people you know, with like I love North Adams. Like when you go to somewhere like, oh I don't know, some town like, I don't know. Cute little towns, or even nice towns, or even New York City. I mean people love New York City who live there, or people love Boston, but I mean people who live in North Adams, I mean I don't think that they're really too thrilled and excited. It seems more like, well I mean I can see people who might enjoy living here, but I can't see people who would kill, or die to live here.

H: Okay. North Adams has a large percent of elderly in the population. Do you think living here has affected your attitude toward the elderly people?

E: Negatively, or positively? [H: Any] I, I feel nervous with the elderly who are on very limited incomes. I think that it's say. I think that's is horrible that we don't have better healthcare for them. And I, I really think that we've made effort, like Saint Joseph's Corp, but I think that they're absolutely not, not anywhere near as much as they should be. And I think that the community doesn't really treat them well. I think that they need to be paid more attention too. And I think another portion of the population that needs to be paid attention to is the youth. But no one really seems to pay attention to anyone.

H: Okay. Speaking of the youth. How do, what do you feel about the educational system in North Adams?

E: I think that it's not horrible. I think that you get out of it as much as you put into it. And I've had wonderful teachers in North Adams, and I've had very poor teachers, and I don't think that's different from anywhere else. I don't think that the quality of education is very bad. I think that some of the buildings, some of the materials that the children are expected to work with are definitely inadequate, as oppose, you know, we have the lowest budget in the state, or something. Another nice thing to add on to our rack of accomplishments in good old NA. But you know, I mean I am surprised of the caliber of teachers that I've had, especially in high school. Middle School was poor. Middle School was a very bad experience. I thought that most of the teachers were quite awful, and I didn't really learn anything. It was one of those three years of my life that I wish I went somewhere else. Now that I think about it, at the time it was okay. But um, I don't think that the education is really horrible. I think that what harms people who are in the schools are the people who don't care to be a part of learning, and who care to do other things with their time.

H: What's the one thing that you believe is most understressed in the educational system, needs to be improved?

E: Individualistic learning. Absolutely. I think that it's very, the course of studies that we have are very rigid. I mean there's like no freedom of expression really until you're a senior. You can't, you know you couldn't make up your own class and take it. And you couldn't do, you couldn't take Marxist ideology if you wanted. And you couldn't take pottery. I mean we have art and gym and music. And you know, your basic US History class. We don't have that many good electives. Everything is sort of like the same, and it's very rigid. I think that there should

be less emphasis placed on things like grades and class rank. I mean in the scheme of things. I think that written evaluations are more important. I think that learning, taking something because you enjoy it and because you learn from it is the most important. And I think that having to take something, I mean there should obviously be a core curriculum, but I think it's a bit excessive to you know, have no options available to you. Because I mean even math, which I don't like, I think that there were, are maths that I could take that I would enjoy more than calculus. But since calculus is the only thing that's offered to me, then that's what I have to take and it's you know, kind of limiting.

H: Do you think there's some advantages to a strict curriculum even though (--)

E: Not particularly.

H: Not ideal.

E: I really don't. I think that you obviously get a little bit of what you need but I think that you could get the same thing from learning on your own. I think that no one reads enough. I think that teachers want you to do busy work, like answer these questions, and do this. Learn vocabulary words. I mean what is the purpose of learning a vocabulary word? What you should do is read, or write, or interpret literature, or write stories, or do something that's constructive and helps you learn, instead of memorizing meaningless vocabulary words, because that is just time filling garbage.

H: Would you say in some ways then that you've been cheated by the North Adams school system? Do you think there are ways (--)

E: No, because I took the harder, I took the harder courses. I think that people who are in the college prep track get, hate their classes, because they're classes that anyone would hate. I mean if I was in them I'd hate them. It's like monotonous. The teacher spoon feeds information, they write it down in their notebook. They take a test on it. And I mean it's so non-challenging that they must feel dumb. And I think that that's part of the problem with it. I don't think that I've been cheated. I think there are certain classes that I really disliked and hated, but I feel that I've had, I do a lot on my own. I took classes at Williams. I um, I read a lot. Not for school, but just for pleasure. Just a lot of different types of things. And I read the paper a lot. So I think that I you know, absorb knowledge and like learn things without really having to think of it in school settings. I think that I'm not you know, illiterate and totally from a hick town, or anything.

H: Okay. Compared to what you know about other schools um, outside of North Adams, where would you place the North Adams system in comparison?

E: I don't think it's bad. I think it's difficult. I think it's just as difficult as other schools. Um, I think that the conditions are not ideal, but I, I wouldn't place it far below other schools. I think it's quite challenging sometimes. I mean I haven't really had to work that hard, but um, I place it in the middle, upper middle.

H: Okay. Where are you planning to attend college now?

E: Um, Smith in North Hampton.

H: North Hampton. Um, does your staying in the general, general community at least as far as college opportunities are reflects some feeling you have about North Adams, about the Berkshires?

E: Am I leaving North Adams because, am I going away to school because I want to leave North Adams? That's a good question. [H: Right] Um, yeah. But I didn't want to go that far away. I mean I didn't want to go to Maine for example, because I really, where I'm going, North Hampton is a beautiful town. It's nice. It's clean and quiet, and it has nice stores, nice restaurants. It's a college town. And it's very appealing to me at the time. And then when I get older I want to live in Boston. Definitely both away from North Adams, but they're definitely both very different lifestyles. I think that who live in big cities want to go to college in the country. And Smith in more of a city than North Adams, and it has more access to cities. So I think that part of it is due to the fact that I wanted to get something different than North Adams, but it's not like I was trying to escape it, because I was going to leave anyways.

H: Okay.

E: Oh, I will say though that Bates, my other choice, was in Maine, in a town that was so similar to North Adams that it was frightening, although it was larger. And that was one of the major things that really turned me off to the school and made me pick Smith.

H: So you feel in many ways then that you're escaping what you've grown up in?

E: Yes.

H: Okay. If you could pick one community outside of the city in which you would want to live where would it be?

E: Um, when I, when I get older I would like to live in a city that's not too big. Something like Boston, or maybe somewhere in Cal(--). Just not, not a tremendously huge city like New York City, or like Chicago. But I'd like, I like what a city has to offer. And I wouldn't necessarily have to live in the city. Suburbs don't bother me, but I don't want to be so isolated from everything. You know, like I'd like to be able to go to good plays, and good concerts, and just be around a lot of people and be near an airport, you know. And uh, be so removed. Although I can picture myself like having a house in the country too, if I had funds for it. Because I love the country, or the ocean.

H: Okay. How far do you plan to pursue your education?

E: Um, well I believe I'll get an upper level degree. I mean probably a PhD, or even a law degree at the least. That's a PhD I think.

H: And what occupation do you plan to [unclear]?

E: Well I don't know, I always wanted to be a lawyer. But then I was just thinking of getting my doctorate and like going from there and just kind of winging it. I don't really know what I'm going to do, so it's kind of difficult. But you know, I don't really think that you have (--) I think that when you go to college it's not really for a career. I think that you just go, you hang out, you take some classes. And then you stumble into a job that has nothing to do with your major, but that's what everyone does. So I mean it's just kind of like one of those experiences where you just kind of grow and learn a lot and you know, learn to deal with life better. I don't think that, especially in liberal arts, that you're really training to be anything at all, because you're not.

H: Okay. From your conversation would it be fair to say that you do not plan to work in North Adams in the future?

E: No.

H: Okay, why would you not want to work in North Adams?

E: I think that the opportunities, I think that the pool of people who work here is limited. I think that if I want to practice law then what is there to practice on? It's not like anyone does anything, except like drunk driving. And it's just boring. I wouldn't even live here. It's gross too.

H: If in sometime in the future you were to have children, would you want them to live in this area [few words unclear]?

E: I wouldn't mind. I turned out fine, I lived here. It's not really that bad. I just don't think that it's like my first choice. I'm not the kind of person that says that my kids have to go to like the best schools, and you know. Because I mean I went to public school and everyone can go to public school, it's fine.

H: Okay. What opportunities do you think North Adams does have to offer children?

E: Um, I think that they can make good friends. I mean I think that it's a quaint town. Your kids are safe here. Not safe, safe, but in the school setting it's not like gang violence runs rampant or anything. I think that there's a little bit of individual attention paid to people. It's not like they get lost in the shuffle. I mean some do, but especially at the elementary level, I think that kids are really you know, helped out a lot.

H: Okay, what if any important opportunities would you say are not available for students?

E: Everything. Study abroad. Um, internships. Everything. We don't do anything educationally. We do your basic school work. We don't have field trips, we don't have the money. We don't have any artistic supplies. We don't have grants to do different projects. Our school just doesn't really do anything. We don't have like a student center. We don't have counseling, peer counseling that much. We don't have any of the programs that are really, that I feel are necessary. Having a good college, having a good school community.

H: Okay. Um, if you're successful in life and have the opportunity to choose, where would you want to retire too?

E: Retire?

H: Yeah.

E: Um, I would like to live in the South of France. Okay, let's be realistic. Um, I don't really get into all that you know, like going to live somewhere warm. Of course I like warm. But I bet I would live in the Northeast still, in a house. I like single family. I don't like condos. And I would probably go to Florida a lot, or go to warm place, but I mean I really like being around when the seasons change. I'm sort of partial to it at this point in my life. I definitely want to retire when I'm like forty though, if possible.

H: I can't guarantee you that much success, but um, [E: let's hope the lottery] in the Northeast would you consider North Adams?

E: Um, probably. It's possible. It depend where my parents were living.

H: Okay.

E: I don't know. Probably not.

H: Probably not?

E: Probably not, but it's possible. So much money I, no, I'm kidding.

H: Okay, that will be unsure for now. Um, onto the future of North Adams, do you think the future of North Adams businesses is sound?

E: No. I think that the mall has really killed business. I think that everything leaves here and I don't think (--) I think that there are projects that are in the works, like the Glen, Mass MoCA, you know, that are like, they could help, but then again they might not. And they might create a totally undesirable community. So it's very difficult to say how that's going to be. I don't think businesses are sound, no. But then again I'm not really a business person. I don't understand business, and I don't really care about business. I wouldn't run a business. So I mean I don't know. I doesn't have that much meaning for me.

H: Okay. Do you think the recent closings of downtown businesses will be detrimental to the future of the city?

E: I don't know. Not particularly. Kind of just goes with the general atmosphere here. No stores, nothing to do. No opportunity.

H: Okay. Would you say then that the city is changing, or that only it's appearances. Do you think the businesses that are moving are still available, or do you think they'll be a definite

switch in the city?

E: I think that appearances, I think that the city has changed for the worse. I mean when businesses leave it's sort of, Main Street is such a depressing thing. There's nothing there anymore. And I think that it just gives the people a feeling like, oh, this town is just really awful. You know, obviously if it was a busy bustling community then it wouldn't be like this. And it's difficult. I mean people have to go to the mall to get anything. You can't even buy anything in town anymore really. You know, it's just, it's really difficult to even (--) You know, I feel bad for the business people who are getting killed by the mall. I don't know why you know, people don't patronize stores who are, you know, in town. But (--)

H: Okay. Do you think North Adams can recover from this? Or do you think the businesses will always be centered away from the city now?

E: Well it depends how Mass MoCA and the Glen do. That's all I, it's all I know about the subject. I mean I think that if it's successful then the town will be okay. And that it will recover and that it will have like a second wind. But I think that if it's unsuccessful that things will only continue to get worse than they are now.

H: How do you think Mass MoCA can improve the city?

E: I think Mass MoCA can bring people into the community. It can bring tourists. It can bring people who are just willing to buy property here. If property value goes up that would be wonderful. It can bring businesses, you know, when you have a lot of people you obviously need goods and services to support them. New industry. I mean it'll, it's just very extensive. It could be very helpful, or else it could be a complete flop. I don't really, I'm not as optimistic about it as most people are. I think, you know, that sometimes that's just(--)

H: Okay, if (--)

SIDE ONE ENDS-SIDE TWO BEGINS.

H: Okay. If the property values go up, which you seem to feel is a positive change, um, couldn't that drive many people out of North Adams? Many people here are poor and possibly couldn't afford housing.

E: I know. I'm being [unclear] liberally, and I should feel bad, but I really don't. So. It could do that, but you know, I mean I think that it's only good. People will hold on to the property that they have. It could not be positive to keep the town in the state that it is now. That would only be a negative thing. So whatever happens should be for the better. I don't know.

H: Okay. What type of affect do you think the Greylock Glen Project could have on us?

E: I really don't know that much about the Glen and I can't say. I think that it could cause

problems traffic, blah, blah, blah. But I mean it should be interesting. It could be kind of neat. I mean you know, you think of really neat resorts you know, like Hilton Head and you wonder if anything was there before. I mean it was probably really boring. And they might have you know, just thrown in some you know, cute little spot and then everyone loves it. But I mean somehow I really doubt that happening in Adams. I don't know why. I live there still and it's very boring. So.

H: Okay. Do you think uh, the North Adams, that the future will be only a tourism and service orientated, orientated community, or do you think some business and industry could survive here?

E: Well see I think that when an area is doing well I think that industry is drawn to it. I mean isn't that (--) I don't know. It's just my perception. And although I mean it is a bad place for manufacturing, I mean I can see why businesses moved out. But I think that it could only have a positive effect, not a negative one. I mean even if you are only providing goods and services, you're still having a lot of people who are employed in a lot of jobs, which is more, of course there still probably will be people on welfare who won't do anything, but that's not a [shock?].

H: Okay. In a, in a worse case scenario let's say, describe what harmful effects um, these two projects, the Mass MoCA and the Greylock Glen could have on the community?

E: Well they could totally fail and everyone's expectations would be ruined. Um, people could be worse off than usual. They would have wasted tons and tons of money. The tourists could be annoying. They could be awful. It could be a real problem. It could over-crowd the city, cause violence, cause crime, drugs, corruption, things like that. But I mean I really don't think that that would happen, but you know it's possible. Where there's money you never know.

H: Okay. Would it be a positive thing for North Adams to be on entirely a tourism orientated community?

E: No, I don't think it's positive for anything to be entirely anything. I mean you shouldn't eat only one food, and you shouldn't do only one thing. I think that you should have a very diverse economy. But I'd rather have one strong one than none at all, which is what we have now.

H: Okay. How would you defend the statement that North Adams is a dying community with no productive future?

E: North Adams has some productive future, but I think that it's dying because there are, there is no business [yawns] just because the opportunities are just dead. And people just really have no future here. It attracts all the people that don't really have a lot to offer. People in the community don't have a lot to offer, and I just think that without some new business, or some new something, influx of people, then the community is definitely headed on the road for death.

H: Okay. Is there any positive thing you can say? Is there anyway you can claim that North Adams would survive?

E: Um, I don't know. I mean I suppose that if the projects are successful (--) Well I mean I'm sure North Adams will carry on in the future, into the future, whether or not Mass MoCa goes through. It's probably going to be just as awful as it is now. I mean obviously it's not a very nice place to live. It has its faults, but I mean it'll carry on. It probably won't be too wonderful, but.

H: Okay. Lastly, in the history books that future generations are going to read, what would be said about North Adams?

E: Well I think that North Adams was once a very interesting place. And I think now that it is one of those places like many other towns that flunked for a long time. And hopefully it will be revived. I mean it's happened in other places, you know, like Lynn, where things were very very depressed, and Lowell. And they've kind of turned it around. They made it kind of chic. They have condos, and you know, sort of neat. But I hope that that's what happens to North Adams. I hope that this is just one of those bad periods that it's going through. And that it's going to get brighter like at the end of the tunnel so to speak. But I mean, I don't know. But I hope so. Because people who are going to live here [unclear].

H: Okay. What one event would have had the greatest effect on the city, whether it would be good or bad?

E: Event? [H: Yeah] I think that the MoCA and the Glen will have an impact on the city if they go through, definitely. And I don't know whether they will be good or bad. As I've said, I mean I think that it's going to be more like a toss up. If it's good, it's going to be really good. If it's bad, it's going to be pretty bad, you know. People will be depressed and they will wonder what the problem is, but you know, I think that that should have some impact on the community because it's a project of such a large focus and scale.

H: Thank you very much.

END OF TAPE